

DO WE REALLY KNOW THAT OUR OATH MEANS?

All police officers throughout this country must take a sworn oath before they are authorized to perform the duties of a law enforcement officer. Is this oath a superficial statement made by our police officers without any understanding of what they are swearing to? Do they really know what the oath requires of them? I think most police officers as well as politicians are just reading the words without any understanding. The oath holds certain major responsibilities and obligations that the average citizen or businessperson does not have. Before I discuss the oath I will point to its origin and attempt to define it.

In America the police officer's oath originates within the United States Constitution (Appendix A). The title of executive officers mentioned in the constitution refers to police officers working under the executive branch of the government. In the United States Constitution under Article IV it states:

"The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution..."

(U. S. Constitution 1787)

The State of Michigan also covers language requiring an oath of office before entering upon the duties of a police officer. Article XI, sec.1 in the Constitution of the State of Michigan (Appendix B), states;

"All officers, legislative, executive and judicial, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, shall take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation: I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution